

Geograficzne badania migracji są związane z różnymi koncepcjami psychologicznymi człowieka i jego zachowań. Zachowaniom migracyjnym w warunkach rozwoju nowoczesnego społeczeństwa informacyjnego najbardziej – jak się wydaje – odpowiada koncepcja poznawcza migracji, szczególnie silnie akcentująca zdeterminowanie decyzji migracyjnych, procesami pozyskiwania, gromadzenia i przetwarzania określonych informacji.

W myśl tej koncepcji zachowania migracyjne kształtują się pod wpływem zarówno bieżących informacji zewnętrznych, jak też trwałej wiedzy zakodowanej w pamięci człowieka. Kolejne fazy podejmowania decyzji zmiany stałego, okresowego lub czasowego miejsca zamieszkania obejmują procesy przetwarzania zdobytych uprzednio informacji, wartościowania skutków migracji oraz ich mechanizm motywacyjny.

## **The role of information in the migration processes in the context of the migration cognitive concept**

In geographic research of migration the demographic and socio-economic factors are often associated with psychological ones. Therefore these researches refer to different psychological theories explaining human behaviour (J. Koziński 1977, 1978, 1980, 1992). The behaviouristic conception is based on the assumption that the migrational behaviour depends mainly on the social and physical environment. The environment acts as a system of rewards and reinforcements (positive stimuli) and punishments (negative stimuli) directing migrational behaviour. The psychodynamic theory suggests that migrational activity is explicable in terms of internal forces (wants, aspirations, impulses), whether conscious or subconscious. If various incentives are out of accordance the decision-making process becomes difficult. According to the cognitive conception migrational activity is affected both by information being currently assimilated from outside and the body of knowledge stored up in the mind. On the other hand, the humanistic

approach in psychology claims a desire of self-realization and balanced development to be the main factor determining migration.

It seems that among the above-mentioned psychological theories the cognitive conception, for its broad – based and logical approach to human behaviour, is the one of greatest significance to the explanation of migrational activeness (J. Koziński 1978, 1980; P. H. Lindsay, D. A. Norman 1984). Its principles are adopted in the present paper to develop a cognitive theory of migrational behaviour. It takes into account determinants of migrational behaviour, data processing, evaluation of the consequences of migration and motivational mechanism<sup>1</sup>. It seems that migration cognitive concept, which pays special attention to the processes of collecting, store and transforming information as a decisive factor of migration, is related to the modern information society members.

Migration is stimulated by a set of particular internal and external factors. The internal factors are relatively durable, complex cognitive structures (personality) including the information recorded in the memory which determine individual wants, aspirations and spatial preferences. Basing oneself on the spatial knowledge an individual possesses, he evaluates alternative places of dwelling and draws up a proper programme of migrational activity. High level of complexity and abstractness of cognitive structures coupled with their openness and activeness facilitate making migrational decisions and putting them into operation<sup>2</sup>. The personality is not, however, the only element influencing one's migrational behaviour.

External factors underlying this behaviour include the information relevant to the planned movement provided by the social, cultural and physical environment. Of particular importance here is the data logically related to migration supplied by media, school, relatives and friends. In case of insufficient external steering (sensorial and social deprivation of information) an efficient migrational action may be hampered. However, the contemporary migrants usually face the problem of excess of information, so they have to select it for its usefulness for a potential migration. If the selection is too rigorous, it can be difficult to choose judiciously a new place of dwelling. Moreover, the exploration completed untimely or tardily impairs the efficiency

of migrational action as well.

This action is also dependent on an active data processing through the mental processes of orientation (perception, imagination, thinking, anticipation of consequences of an action)<sup>3</sup>. It is closely connected with the process of formulating one's expectations concerning a planned movement which consists in anticipation of its consequences, whether dependent or not on the migrant. These expectations are influenced by the possibilities of actualisation of the migrant's knowledge (mental accessibility and ease of recalling information), his tendency to take optimistic or pessimistic view of consequences ensuing the movement, and inconformity between migrant's beliefs and actual information on probable after-effects of migration (cognitive dissonance).

A matter of fundamental importance for a potential migrant is how he rates (subjectively) the consequences of the planned movement (usefulness of migration) taking into account the positive (e.g. increase in social prestige, better dwelling standard), negative (e.g. hostility of new neighbours, long daily journey to work), and neutral (similar neighbourhood) factors. The estimate mostly depends on the migrants personality and is founded mainly on actual information on alternative places of residence. The migrant makes an assessment of positive and negative results of removal through the use of various measures<sup>4</sup>. Empirical researches

have found that the relationship between subjective and objective values of a new place of dwelling is non-linear. This correlation can be approximated by the involution function. It follows that the increase in subjective value of characteristics of a destination is bigger than the increase in real value of corresponding characteristics. The subjective value of simple migrational stimuli has small significance because the migrants usually make a multifarious (multidimensional) estimate of the prospect dwelling considering concomitantly the residence itself, its physical and social environment, conditions of daily travelling to work and school, location of commercial and service establishments, opportunities for sport and recreation, etc. This evaluation is carried out through the use of different strategies, among which the most common is probably the linear strategy<sup>5</sup>. Pursuing this strategy the migrant makes a selection of different characteristics of a new place of residence, subjectively rates their importance and carries out a linear integration of the characteristic's values and their weights. This strategy can be described by a linear function the value of which is equal to the sum of products of the values and weights of the items. Potential migrants can differ in evaluation of the features of a given place of residence. However, those who adhere to the same system of values (Dionysian, Herculean, Promethean, Apollonian) are likely to appreciate similar qualities of habitation.

Decisions on migration, more or less venturesome, involve different styles of

integration of information determining the attractiveness of movement. The migrants disposed to act realistically take chiefly into consideration the probable outcomes of the movement. The usefulness of migration is here of secondary importance. For those who believe in risky acting the major factor is how they assess the after-effects of the removal.

According to the analysed theory the migrational motivation<sup>6</sup> is underlain by informational process. The information pertaining to a planned movement, both recorded in the cognitive structures and coming from the environment, generates a motivational tension. It appears when the relatively stable aspirations as to the habitation quality diverge from the actual value of the space occupied by an individual. The correlation between the motivational force and the magnitude of this divergence is probably parabolic in shape. It means that small difference between the aspirations and the actual achievements in reaching a desirable habitation corresponds to a low level of migrational motivation. In this case an individual does not undertake any migrational action. A strong migrational motivation is also unlikely to appear if the divergence between the desired and the real habitation standard is too sharp. As it is hard to realize a dream of a better place for living, the migrational motivation remains weak. The strongest motivation arises when the difference between the aspirations and the achievements in quest of a satisfactory dwelling place is moderate.

The mechanism of migration is also affected by emotional states. An arousal of positive emotions connected with a planned movement improves chances for its realization. On the other hand the feelings of fear, awe or foreboding caused by planning a movement can

hinder or even prevent a migrational action. In some case a strong attachment to the place of residence holds an individual from making any decision on migration. The emotions probably play a part of additional heuristic rules which make man follow or abandon a given pursuit of a new habitation.

## *Notes*

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- <sup>1</sup> Although from the psychological point of view every migrational activity has a similar structure, nevertheless it can be composed of different elements depending on adopted division of components of an individual action, cf. W. Szewczuk (1966), T. Tyszka (1986).
- <sup>2</sup> According to the psychological theory of decision-making process (J. Koziński 1977, 1992) an individual making a decision on migration chooses a particular migrational action from among a set of all possible actions of this type. The situation entails a risk as the migrant can not be quite sure as to the eventual consequences of the movement (e.g. what the relations with new neighbours would be like?). The decisions on migration are allocational. They take effect when in a certain area, which is the space of activity of a migrant, there are available dwellings. The migrant's task to find among them the one which meets his or her needs.
- <sup>3</sup> A factor of special importance in human migrations is the spatial perception, in particular the perception of distance (J. Słodczyk 1990).
- <sup>4</sup> Techniques of such measuring can be examined by different direct and indirect psychological methods (J. Koziński 1977)
- <sup>5</sup> The migrants can also follow the conjunctural, alternative and configurational strategies.
- <sup>6</sup> After the model of inducing motivation by J. Reykowski (1982), the main factors determining the motivational force include: motivational tension, gratification values, and subjective probability of acquisition of these values through migration